

Inspection of a good school: Northfleet School for Girls

Hall Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8AQ

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

Northfleet School for Girls continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Northfleet School for Girls is a diverse and inclusive community. Behaviour and attitudes are very positive. Pupils are polite, respectful, courteous and considerate. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are caring and supportive. Staff turnover is low because teachers enjoy working at the school.

The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Low-level disruption is not tolerated, and was not seen during the inspection. Pupils said that if bullying or unkindness occurs, then it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are safe and know how to keep safe outside of school.

Besides the well-established academic curriculum, there is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities. This includes sports activities such as badminton, basketball and boxing. There are clubs for languages, mathematics, karaoke and mindfulness.

There is also a school farm with goats, chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs. The farm provides opportunities to educate pupils about farming, agriculture, horticulture, food production and healthy eating.

Pupils take on a variety of leadership roles, including the Head Girls' team and student councillors. A significant number of pupils act as school ambassadors for such diverse areas as well-being, language, reading, sports and high expectations.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is designed to be ambitious, and successfully meets the needs of all pupils. The content builds progressively on the primary curriculum with schemes of work that are coherent and well written. The sixth-form curriculum includes traditional A levels as well as the International Baccalaureate. Sixth-form numbers are rising rapidly, and confirm the popularity of the provision.

The uptake of languages remains an issue, and has had an adverse impact on the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The EBacc entry rate is well below the national average. The school is working hard to raise the profile of languages. This includes language days, language trips and language ambassadors, as well as committed and enthusiastic teachers. The curriculum in modern foreign languages is very robust.

Teachers are enthusiastic and their subject knowledge is strong. This is evidenced through their confident expositions in the classroom. Literacy and subject-specific vocabulary are carefully supported across all subjects. Reading is a priority and staff work hard to assist those in the early stages of reading. There is a strong emphasis on careers so that pupils meet the school's high aspirations for them.

Teachers make frequent checks on learning to help identify what pupils know, and where they require further support. Assessment is regular, and is used well to identify and address gaps as well as rewrite the curriculum. Pupils are supported to learn more and remember more through quizzes and recaps as well as the joy which they have for learning.

Personal development is closely linked to the school's curriculum vision. It is delivered through the 'Dream Big' programme. The programme highlights high expectations, working together and the development of learning skills. Pupils are actively prepared to be creative, resilient and world minded.

The curriculum provides good support for pupils' welfare and well-being. The tutorial programme is quickly responsive to issues or events that arise. The content embraces the recently introduced relationships and sex education curriculum. This is thoughtfully sequenced and interwoven throughout the provision.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are known well. Staff are well trained and provided with appropriate information to help these pupils. High prior attaining pupils are challenged in the classroom. They are supported through more demanding activities, as well as a range of enrichment activities. The school also offers a fast-track curriculum and additional examination qualifications.

The sixth form benefits from strong leadership and significantly improved facilities. Students appreciate opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities and undertake leadership responsibilities. Students benefit from a broad curriculum offer. As a result, an increasing number continue their education at well-respected universities.

Senior leaders have a very accurate understanding of the school. This is shown through the school's self-evaluation, which is comprehensive and thorough. Senior leaders and middle leaders have a shared vision. They enjoy close working relationships. They are focused on further improvements to the curriculum and to pupil outcomes.

Leaders routinely focus on the staff's well-being. They are responsive to ideas to reduce staff workload in partnership with the well-being group. Staff appreciate the range of professional development opportunities available to them. The responses to the staff survey show that staff are proud to be part of the school.

Governors visit the school regularly, and actively engage with staff and pupils. Governors are knowledgeable and have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They know the school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are successful procedures in place to safeguard pupils at the school. The single central record is fully compliant and there is a vigilant culture in place, with swift action taken when this is required. Staff are well trained in safeguarding practices. There are appropriate and rigorous safer recruitment practices in place.

The safeguarding policy is full and detailed. It covers a wide range of specific issues, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages and gender-based violence. Pupils spoken to confirmed that they feel safe, and are equipped to deal with matters arising inside and outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The take-up of modern foreign languages is not high enough. As a result, the number of pupils taking the full EBacc is below national averages. Leaders should continue their efforts to increase the take-up of languages, by raising the profile of the subject and ensuring that the EBacc is at the heart of the curriculum, in line with the Department for Education's ambition.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118788
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10211506
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1186
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clive Brooke
Headteacher	Chris Norwood
Website	www.nsfsg.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Northfleet School for Girls is a larger-than-average non-selective secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 18, with a small number of boys enrolled in the sixth form. The school is maintained by the local authority and is a member of the Northfleet Schools Co-Operative Trust.
- Nine pupils attend courses off site at three registered education providers, one alternative education provider and a neighbouring hospital school.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and staff, as well as a range of pupils. They considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety as well as their welfare and well-being.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum documents, school policies and the single central record. The lead inspector met with members of the governing board, and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 162 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, along with 90 additional responses from parents and carers. They reviewed the survey responses from 125 staff, and 411 pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector

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